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recreation, modern hygiene, and fashions, friends, and future professions.[6] 578

E. Effect on Family Economic Role

The decreasing ability of the family to function as a production and consumption unit or as an employment agency in an industrial society has already been pointed out. The initial break with the old form of employment was forced by foreign firms of government services headed by foreigners. Their prohibition against officers hiring or recommending relatives was only beginning to be copied by wholly Chinese institutions such as banks, factories, and schools in the years before World War II. Where the employment of relatives was forbidden, friendship, a common birthplace, training in the same school, or membership in the same secret society often provided the basis for a personal link between an employer and a prospective employee and for the rise of cliques in business and government offices. 466 596

Scattered surveys of various strata of the population in industrial areas indicate that only at the upper managerial or owner level, where the facts of economic operation were most pressing, was the majority in favor of impersonal, rational selection of employees. Even in modern

6. Lang, op. cit., pp. 284-87.

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colleges, only about half the students appeared to favor that choice. With each successively lower economic level, the preference was more overwhelmingly for selection on the basis of kinship.[7]

F. Effect on Social and Political Role

With the collapse of the imperial system in 1912, the family was no longer fitted to serve as the social and political training ground of China. The political parties and modern schools, particularly the colleges and universities, now began to train youth for the new political world which was coming into being after 1911. No comparable institutions existed to inculcate in youth a moral and ethical code that would serve as a common guide in the new society. Attempts by the Kuomintang leaders during the period of the National Government to restore filial piety along with a revised Confucian code to the service of an increasingly authoritarian-minded state met with failure among the nation's youth.[8]

IV. THE FAMILY UNDER COMMUNISM

A. The Marriage Law

In reconstructing Chinese society, the

7. Ibid., pp. 186-89.

8. Mary C. Wright, "From Revolution to Restoration: The Transformation of Kuomintang Ideology," Far Eastern Quarterly, August, 1955, pp. 515-32.

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and city dwellers kept their ties with their native villages, returned there whenever possible, and many saw commercial activity in the town only as means of the acquisition of sufficient wealth to buy farming land upon their return to the village. The town population, then, is mostly made up of artisans and peasants, plus a small number of landlords, retired officials, county functionaries, and established merchant families. The county seats (hsien capitals) were the centers for tax collection and administration of the surrounding farm-villages and also served as market towns where the peasant might sell his crop and purchase the manufactured goods he could not produce.

Town life for the average artisan was as meager as that of his relatives in the village. Long hours, hard work, low pay, few holidays were the lot of most, and living conditions were generally poorer and more crowded than those in the villages. Proprietors of many shops required their employees to live on the premises, so that they seldom visited their families. The diet of the town dweller was as poor as that of the poor farmer -- mostly cereals, vegetables, and some condiments, and meat and fruit on holidays only. Brief holidays were allowed at the New Year, the Ch'ing-ming festival, the mid-Autumn festival, and the Dragon Boat festival. On these occasions, townspeople usually tried to return to their villages; if this was impossible they enjoyed such delicacies as they could afford and strolled the streets, perhaps visiting friends and attending seasonal fairs and theaters.

Life in the towns was, then, closely linked with village life. But in the provincial capitals, such as

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Kaifeng, Changsha, and Canton, life in some respects has been greatly altered by the modernization that has spread from the coastal to the inland cities. The streets are paved, and schools, newspapers, movies, and radio make the people more aware of the outside world than their cousins in the towns and villages. In the cities, major industries built large dormitories for workers, labor unions and political clubs developed as new foci for social activity. Yet the living conditions grew worse as workers moved into the cities. Crowding reached unbelievable proportions. The only comparable figures are for Chengtu, a city outside the Central-South area, but they suggest the dimensions of this problem in all urban centers. Chengtu, with predominantly one-storied buildings, had a population density of 50,000 per square mile as compared with 22,500 per square mile in New York City.[8] One survey suggests that workers in the newer industries were somewhat better off than workers in the traditional trades,[9] but their traditional holidays were shortened without, in most cases, the introduction of a six-day week. In the crowded cities the festivals of the agricultural year continued to determine the holidays, and (although national holidays were increasingly observed), like the town dwellers, city dwellers tried to return to their families villages for at least one of the holidays. Another link to one's native place was the system of clubs composed of those city-dwellers who had a common provincial

8. Winfield, op. cit., p. 88. These figures would seem to be for the period 1945-47.

9. Lang, op. cit., pp. 88-89.

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The businessmen do not fare any better. Sale, purchase, sources of supply, and market outlet are regulated and controlled. Government bonds must be purchased, and exorbitant taxation has been imposed. Trapped by restriction and taxation, many businessmen have been forced to abandon their enterprises. The general atmosphere is certainly not conducive to public confidence in the government.

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3. Compulsory Services

The Communist government frequently drafts rural workers for public labor. For major irrigation projects, even farmers in distant areas are mobilized. The Ching River flood control project in Hupeh Province, for example, enlisted almost 200,000 "voluntary workers" from Central-South China.[35] To maintain a militia for emergency services, the government requires the young peasant to receive training in his spare time. When he is formally inducted into the militia, he is assigned to patrol the key centers in the village, guard and help to ship government grain, assist in combatting bandits, and take part in group activities organized for militia members.

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A parallel scheme is instituted for urban residents, requiring them to render certain services in the areas of their residence. They must attend meetings and stand ready to be called for patrol duties. During 1951-53,[36] citizens of Wuhan were ordered to patrol the streets at night.

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35. Yangtze Daily, March 30, 1952, p. 1.

36. Ibid., March 4, 1953, p. 3.

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At the end of 1950, the Communists used the "Resist-America-Aid-Korea" Movement to step up the tempo of the labor emulation drive. The workers of factories and mines and other enterprises in Central-South China were mobilized to sign "patriotic emulation pacts." Four large cotton mills in Wuhan reported a 16 per cent increase in daily production during the month of November. The workers of the Wuchang Electric Company set their goal to increase production by supplying the same amount of water and electricity while reducing the cost of production. The Communists boast that the railway workers of the Chiang-an section of the Peking-Hankow Line, after signing patriotic-emulation pacts, ran the services for two months without a single accident.[16]

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In the Communist newspapers, reports of increase in production are frequently followed by reports of an increase in industrial accidents and loss of working days due to sick leaves. For instance, in the Heng-yang Railway workshop, two weeks after the beginning of labor emulation in April 1950, there were 545 persons (58.4 per cent of the total workers) reported absent because of accidents or sickness, thus causing the loss of 727 working days.[17] The I-Lo Coal Mine (a state-owned-enterprise located 25 miles southwest of Loyang, Honan Province) reported the most serious case of

16. Workers' Daily, Nov. 7, Dec. 15 and 26, 1950; Chinese Worker Monthly, Oct. 1950, p. 36, and Oct. 15, 1950, p. 18.

17. Ibid., June 15, 1950, p. 33.

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gas explosion in its history, which resulted in more than 100 deaths. The investigation committee found out that the main cause of the accident was a mistake made by management, which had carried out "production emulation" at the cost of labor safety.[18]

V. WAGES AND PURCHASING POWER

In the early period of the Communist regime, apart from individual adjustments, no significant change in the wage system was made. In order to insure the stable income of the working class against the fluctuation of commodity prices, wages at first were calculated in terms of some essential commodities such as rice or millet. In Central-South China the wage-unit system was put into practice in March 1951. The Central-South Military and Political Committee issued the decree on "Measures Concerning the Calculation of the Wage Unit in the Central-South Region" on March 11, 1951, according to the Yangtze Daily. One wage unit in this region was worth the sum of the retail values of the following daily necessities of which the government had control.

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18. Ibid., June 15, 1950, p. 34.

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V. LABOR WELFARE

A. Labor Insurance

Under the Labor Insurance Regulations of Communist China published in March 1951 and revised in January 1953, there were 5,380,000 workers insured in 1954 against losses[30] caused by old age, illness, and disability. In Central-South China, 317 organizations with a total of 155,000 workers were covered by the Labor Insurance Regulations in the first year of their implementation.[31] After 1950, all enterprises employing more than 300 workers in this region had established their own clinics to give free medical care to their workers.[32] Many workers in Central-South China were sent under the provisions of the labor insurance to Lu-shan, a famous summer resort, for rest and convalescence.

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During the last quarter of 1950, many workers enlisted to fight in Korea as volunteers. The family dependents of those who were killed in action received a monthly pension from the labor insurance fund. In Wuhan, the family dependents of 11 seamen killed in Korea in September 1950 were alleged to have been awarded from 50-60 per cent of the men's original wages for a period of ten years.[33]

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30. People's China, May 1, 1955, pp. 3-5.
31. Yangtze Daily, Oct. 1, 1951, p. 3.
32. China Daily News, May 14, 1955, p. 6.
33. Chinese Worker Monthly, Oct. 15, 1950, p. 86.

1:Stanford U. S-4, 5 1956 AF14 Central China AF14

Such sporadic examples notwithstanding, a letter from a worker in a Hsin-yang factory in Honan Province indicates that labor insurance regulations have not been enforced in many cases. The letter stated that the manager of the factory did not want to give sick leave to a worker who fell ill, and so the man was forced to spend half of his wages in order to pay for a substitute worker for a few days, over and above his expenses for treatment and medicine.[34]

B. Labor Safety and Industrial Accidents

The Communists allege that the Central People's Government enacted 119 decrees, rules, and regulations concerning labor safety and sanitation[35] between 1949 and 1953. On the basis of press reports about industrial accidents emanating from the China Mainland, it is doubtful that these rules and regulations have been carried out. At the end of 1949, the Chinese People's Government initiated a nation-wide check-up on industrial safety and sanitation in all factories and mines. When this investigation started in the Central-South Region early in 1950, it was discovered that not a few factories and mines had completely neglected labor-safety measures. Conditions in the coal mines in Honan and Hunan provinces were the worst. After a serious accident resulting in more than one hundred deaths at the I-lo Coal Mine in Honan in February 1950, the Provincial Government issued

34. Yangtze Daily, Aug. 25, 1951, p. 5.
35. People's China, July 1, 1953, p. 11.

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new detailed regulations concerning labor safety in coal mining, and conditions in the coal mines in Honan were said to have since improved.[36] 466

In order to keep their labor-safety record perfect, the administrations and the trade unions of some factories and mines in Central-South China concealed industrial accidents from the local labor offices and governments. On October 9, 1952, the Labor Department of the Central-South Military and Political Committee issued a notice calling upon all enterprises to carry out "Measures Concerning the Report of Occupational Accidents and Deaths in Industrial, Transportation and Construction Enterprises" published by the Central Government. It was stated that all industrial accidents and deaths should be reported to the respective labor office or local government. The labor office or local governments at all levels might investigate any accident or death. If it should be discovered that the responsible administration or trade unions intentionally concealed the accidents or deaths from the labor office or local government, they would be punished according to the regulations.[37] This warning implies that some reports about labor safety had been falsified by the factory administration and the trade unions.

C. Labor Education and Recreation

Before the Communists took over the China Mainland, from 60 to 80 per cent of the Chinese 466 873

36. Chinese Worker Monthly, June 15, 1950, p. 36.

37. Yangtze Daily, Oct. 9, 1952, p. 1.

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workers were illiterate (that is, could read less than 1,000 Chinese characters). "To do away with illiteracy" has been a slogan used by the Communists as an aim of the new regime. Illiteracy had been a great obstacle to the improvement of Chinese workers on certain technical levels and thus had hindered the increase of labor productivity. At the beginning of the new regime, the Communists encouraged workers to take advantage of the night classes run by different enterprises, and the workers were said to have been very enthusiastic about their studies. For instance, according to the statistics for 33 factories in 1949 in Chengchow, Honan Province, 84 per cent of the total workers were illiterate or were on the lower grade school level. In the first quarter of 1950, there were 34 night schools opened for the workers in Chengchow.[38] Li Hsiu-ying, a 37-year-old woman worker of the Wuhan No. 1 Cotton Mill, had worked for twenty-nine years without a chance to study, but supposedly learned over 2,400 characters within a few months.[39] "The quick method of learning Chinese characters" began in 1952, and it has been of great assistance in accelerating the elimination of illiteracy among the workers.

In the region as a whole only sixteen newspapers and periodicals were published for workers in 1950. The Short Course School for workers[40] was started

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38. Chinese Worker Monthly, May 15, 1950, p. 48.
39. People's China, May 1, 1953, p. 12.
40. Yangtze Daily, August 29, 1950, p. 4.

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in Wuhan in 1950. The workers who left their production work for schools received their original pay. It was for the Party, the trade union, and management to decide who would be qualified for additional technical training. In 1950, Central-South China sent 110 workers to the Chinese People's University in Peking.[41] The Communists had decided to create a "new intelligentsia" among the working class.

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As for recreation, by the end of 1954, 11,929 clubs had been set up in factories, mines, and other enterprises in the country. In the Central-South Region, the unions in Kwangtung Province had established 34 cultural centers for workers. In the cultural centers, there were libraries and recreation halls so that the workers could enjoy their leisure time. But after political studies, criticism meetings, and participation in all kinds of campaigns and movements such as "Suppression-of-Counterrevolutionaries," "Resist-America-Aid-Korea," and the "Five-Anti" and "Three-Anti" campaigns, it is a miracle that the Chinese workers still manage to find time to eat and sleep. They have very little leisure time.

D. Housing Conditions of the Chinese Workers

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According to Communist reports, the Chinese People's Government spent more than 286,000,000 yuan (new currency) on housing projects for workers

41. Workers' Daily, June 6, 1950, p. 1.

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in 1952. In 1953, the government allocated 130,000,000 square feet of floor space for building workers' living quarters. In the Central-South Region, the housing projects for workers were concentrated in Wuhan and Canton, the two industrial centers in this region. Canton started its housing projects in 1952. By May 1955, they had built 62 one-story houses and 3 large apartment buildings. About 30,000 workers and their families moved in. One unit consisted of two rooms, kitchen, and bath. Each tenant pays 1.80 yuan (new currency equivalent to US$ 0.72) maintenance fee per month. In the Wuhan area, new houses for workers were said to have replaced dilapidated huts and tenements. The drainage system in the factory districts had also been improved.[42]

Reports of improvement of housing conditions in other areas in Central-South China are scattered, but they all indicate that the solution of the housing problems for the Chinese workers has a long way to go in Communist China. Since the initiation of the Communist first Five-Year Plan in 1953, reports about plans for labor welfare occur less frequently. The cost of production has been cut as low as possible in order to fulfill the production goals of the plan within the limits of the straitened economy.

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42. People's China, August 16, 1953, p. 38 and May 17, 1955, p. 2; China Daily News, New York, May 20, 1955, p. 6.

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issued a notice calling for the cessation of the flood of peasants into cities where the evacuation of the unemployed is going on. Any peasant who wants to leave his village must do so with reason and only with the permission of his local peasant's association.[45] According to the Chinese Communists, the unchecked flow of peasants into cities is the main cause of the unemployment which endangers economic stability and national defense.[46]

VIII. THE FIVE-YEAR-PLAN AND CHINESE LABOR

The first step toward preparing China for the Communist first Five-Year-Plan was the tightening of Party control over trade unions, which were considered by the Communist as spheres of Party influence or as a "transmission belt" between the Party and the masses.[47] In the early 1950's, trade unions under the leadership of Li Li-san were striving to strike some balance between the interests of the workers and the requirements of the production plan. It was in this period that many reports about the establishment of workers' hospitals cultural centers, creches, sanatoria, and rest homes appeared in Communist newspapers. After the Seventh All-China Congress of Trade Unions held in Peking in May 1953, Li was replaced by Lai Jo-yü. One criticism of Li was that his "leadership of the union has led it away from leadership of the Party by treating the trade union as the highest form of

45. Asia Foundation Bulletin, Sept. 29, 1952, p. 2.

46. Union Research Service, Hong Kong, Sept. 16, 1955.

47. People's China, June 7, 1953, p. 13.

1:Stanford U. S-4, 5 1956 AF14 Central China AF14

the working class," and that the trade union overemphasizes attempts to raise the living standard of the people at the cost of their long-term interests.[48]

During the first half of 1953, production in the steel industry and in mines was very unsatisfactory; 33 per cent were unable to fulfill their pledges. Light industry also lagged behind the scheduled production plan.[49] A campaign to "increase production and practice economy"[50] was launched again during the last half of 1953, and the All-China Federation of Trade Unions issued a directive calling for the further development of the labor-emulation drive[51] in April of 1954.

Accounts of industrial accidents in newspapers in Central-South China increased during the second half of 1953 and the first half of 1954, when frantic efforts were made to fulfill lagging schedules. According to reports from 64 factories and mines in the Wuhan area, a total of 1,857 accidents had occurred from January to March 1954, including 6 deaths and 19 serious injuries. During the same period, the total of sick leaves taken by the injured workers and staff reached 17,700 days and caused financial losses amounting to over 850,000,000 yuan (old currency). The number of accidents in three months amounted to 44.7 per cent of the total for the entire year of 1953.[52]

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48. Far Eastern Economic Review, Hong Kong, June 16, 1955, p. 753.

49. Current Background, U.S. Consulate, Hong Kong, No. 322, March 20, and No. 323, March 25, 1955.

50. "Practice Economy" is a Communist term

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At the No. 4 Engineering Company in Canton, a worker fell from a high ledge and sustained severe injuries. When the case was reported to the plant supervisor, he said, "If there are going to be a lot of accidents, let them be big ones. Do not bother me with small ones."[53] A section chief in Chengchow Railway Administration, who had failed to fulfill his pledge to repair 45 cars in one month, "borrowed" hours from the workers and made the workers finish after their regular shift by work on Sundays. As a result, 13 per cent of the workers fell ill because of exhaustion.[54]

"Factories are battlefields and casualties are inevitable"[55] has been the Communist slogan during the increase in the tempo of production under labor emulation. Industrial accidents in factories and mines have increased to an alarming degree throughout China.

Since the initiation of the Five-Year Plan in 1953, all activities of the trade unions have led to an increase in production. The Communists plan to concentrate all manpower and materials in order to fulfill the plan, and since 1953 the workers have been driven harder than ever.

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50. (continued) for decreasing cost of production.
51. People's Daily, April 11, 1954, p. 1.
52. Yangtze Daily, June 30, 1954; China Weekly, June 10, 1955, pp. 52-53; Survey of China Mainland Press, Hong Kong, U. S. Consulate-General, No. 963, Jan. 6, 1955, p. 13.
53. Canton Daily, Feb. 8, 1955.
54. Hsin kuan-ch'a, New Observation, Peking, Aug. 16, 1953, p. 12.
55. Yangtze Daily, F b. 21, 1955; People's Daily, March 1955.

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FORCED LABOR

I. RECRUITMENT AND SIZE OF FORCED LABOR

The organization and employment of forced labor, including both conscript and civilian and prisoner labor, in the Central-South provinces follow the same pattern in the country as a whole.[1] Consequently, as far as prisoner labor is concerned, the forced labor contingents in the Central-South area are also recruited from (1) members of the "landlord" and "rich peasant" classes during the "land reform" program, which was completed in 1952, (2) "counterrevolutionaries" sentenced under the drive begun after the entry of Communist China in the Korean war, (3) and "criminals" sentenced under the "Three-Anti" and "Five-Anti" campaigns. Probably the largest number of recruits are derived from "counterrevolutionaries" and "landlords."

According to a report by Teng Tzu-hui, then Chairman of the Central-South Military and Political Committee, dated November 21, 1951,[2] "counterrevolutionaries" were dealt with in two broad categories--those whose sins against "the people" were written in blood and those whose crimes were less grievous. People in the first category were given the death

1. The employment of forced labor, recruited from among the state's active and potential opponents, on economic projects in which mass labor and/or cheap labor can be used advantageously as an integral part of the country's economic planning is derived from Soviet experience. The general philosophy has been consistently expressed in Mao Tse-tung's "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship," the Common

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youths scattered throughout the Central-South provinces. Workers in these institutions are more or less restricted to their place of detention. There is no official account of the location and number of prisons. However, according to 1948 statistics, there were 556 prisons and detention houses in the Central-South provinces.[6] Since the 1954 regulations governing forced labor provide for the establishment of detention houses at the hsien level, it may be assumed that there are a minimum of 664 prisons and detention houses in the 618 hsien and 46 municipalities of the area. The actual number is likely to be appreciably larger. On the other hand, units of "reform-through-labor" corps are highly mobile. Subject to the overall control of the national Ministry of Public Security and its agencies, they may be transferred to places where cheap mass labor may be used, and are often found on important construction sites within the Central-South. Some of the activities in which forced labor has been engaged will be briefly described in the following sections.

II. THE CHING-CHIANG PROJECT (HUPEH AND HUNAN)

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The section of the Yangtze between Chih-chiang in Hupeh and Ch'eng-ling'chi in Hunan, also known as the Ching-chiang, is the site of a major water-

6. Chung-hua Min-kuo T'ung-chi Nien-chien [Statistical Yearbook of China], Nanking, Bureau of Statistics, 1948, p. 392.

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conservation project in Central-South China in which mass labor has been employed. A 133-kilometer (about 83 miles) dyke had been built under the Nationalists, which served to protect some seven million mou (about 1.05 million acres) of farm land, with a population of three million, against the annual flood in August-September. Known as the "life line" of the people, the dyke had fallen into disrepair. Accordingly, strengthening of the original dyke became the first part of the Ching-chiang project under the Communists. The second part of the project consisted of the construction of a large flood-water reservoir (projected capacity, 5.5 billion cubic meters or about 194 billion cubic feet) east of the Hu-tu River and west of the Ching-chiang.[7]

The directive to proceed with the harnessing of the Ching-chiang was issued by the Central-South Military and Political Committee on March 15, 1952. At the same time, it was announced that "voluntary" labor, meaning "unpaid" labor as a rule, would be recruited as was the case in the Hwai River project.[8] In addition, flood victims and refugees, as well as the army, were called upon to take part. The army was assigned to dredge the Huang-t'ien (Yellow Sky) Lake, one of the most difficult parts of the project. The

7. Ch'ih-se K'ung-pu-hsia Ti Hu-pei [Hupeh Under the Red Terror], Taipei, Chung-yang wei-yüan-hui ti-liu-tsu, October, 1954, p. 22.

8. Hwai River Project is discussed in the East China Region study.

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entire labor force was organized in the fashion of an army, directed by General Headquarters and Command posts which were in turn supervised by a Flood Control Committee.

Working conditions at the Ching-chiang project may be glimpsed from Communist press reports extolling the project workers' achievements. One such passage reads: "Right after lunch, the fighters went back to work. When their primitive tools broke down, they just jumped into the bone-chilling water and dug out the sticky mud with their bare hands. On the eleventh day (from the beginning of the project), they worked past midnight, but returned to work the following day in spite of their exhaustion."[9] Another report states: "When the tempo of work was stepped up, the workers had only one meal a day, and they worked day and night for seven consecutive days...On one occasion, workers on the Hu-tu River did not have enough time to place wooden blocks on the river bed, and one whole company jumped into the river to block the sliding of the mud."[10] "Some of the fighters formed three-man teams. One person would lie down on the mud serving as a dredge, the other two would pile mud on him and in this way drag the mud out of the river bed. Besides the man's two twinkling eyes, there was no other sign of human life."[11]

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9. Ch'ang-chiang Jih-pao, March 16, 1952.
10. Ibid., March 26, 1952.
11. Ibid., June 21, 1952.

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Work on the Ching-chiang project commenced on April 5, 1952, and the first part of the plan was completed on June 20 of the same year. The volume of earth excavation totaled 23.1 million cubic meters,[12] approximately equivalent to over 20 million man-days, taking into account the almost complete absence of construction machinery. However, since further construction and annual maintenance and repair in view of the recurrent floods have had to be carried out, the continued employment of mass labor on the same general construction site may be expected.

III. LABOR CONTINGENTS IN HIGHWAY AND RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION (KWANGTUNG AND KWANGSI)

In the building of railways and highways both civilian labor and inactive troops are also used. According to a central government directive of March 31, 1951, civilians may be conscripted to work on highways at the rate of ten man-days a year. They have to supply their own tools and food and are given no monetary remuneration.[13] Only two railways have been built in the Central-South provinces since 1950, one from Lai-pin to Mu-nan-kuan (formerly Chen-nan-kuan) in Kwangsi, the other from Li-t'ang in Kwangsi to Chan-chiang (Kuang-chou-wan) in Kwangtung. Although highway construction has been concentrated in Northwest and Southwest China, some lines have also been built with mass labor in the Central-South, including the lines from Mei-hsien

12. Ronald Hsia, The Role of Labor-Intensive Investment Projects in China's Capital Formation, Cambridge, Mass., Center for Internat'l Studies, M.I.T., summer, 1954, p. 90.

13. [See following page.]

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in Kwangtung to Shang-hang in Fukien and the one from Ch'ing-yüan to Fo-kang in Kwangtung. The location of mass labor contingents in the future will doubtless depend upon the selection of the routes to be built.

IV. A TYPICAL "REFORM-THROUGH-LABOR" CAMP IN CANTON

Railway and highway building, as well as construction of large water conservation projects, are all examples of the concentrated employment of mass labor. A somewhat different case is found in the employment in Kwangtung of forced-labor groups in various agricultural, mining, and industrial undertakings. A typical case is provided by the "reform-through-labor" units under the direction of the Canton Public Security Bureau.[14]

According to the Canton Public Security Bureau, at one time, municipal construction received the largest allocation of labor force under the control of the Bureau. However, the prisoners were also put to work in producing bricks and tiles, reclaiming waste land, planting fruit trees and food and commercial crops, raising farm animals, and manufacturing various handicraft products, including rope and wooden and bamboo wares.

The bureau stressed that forced labor was supplemented by political education. Many prisoners were

13. Chung-yang Ts'ai-ching Cheng-ts'e Fa-ling Hui-pien [Compilation of Laws and Regulations Concerning Financial and Economic Policies], Vol. III, Peking, Ts'ai-ching wei'yüan-hui, 1952, pp. 713-15.

14. Ta-kung Pao, Hong Kong, December 15, 1951.

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definite program which in this case was: Monday review of world affairs; Tuesday, discussion of the world situation; Wednesday, criticism of individuals; Thursday, China's internal situation; Friday, criticism of individuals again; Saturday, the discussion of the criticisms for the whole week. The "criticism of individuals" is what the people on the farm feared most, because when a person came up for criticism, his fate was virtually sealed. Fear of the leader and fear of each other constitute an essential part of political re-education.

VII. COMMENTS

Although official Communist Chinese sources have been notably reticent on the development of "reform-through-labor" establishments in individual areas which are sometimes camouflaged by being called factories,[26] such information as is available in connection with the Central-South provinces points to certain considerations to which attention may be directed. It is entirely possible that these characteristics are by no means restricted to conditions in the Central-South.

1. "Reform-through-labor" establishments such as the ones in Central-South China serve the dual purpose of providing political punishment and large reserve pools of cheap labor, endowed in the majority of cases with high mobility. The presence

26. Freedom Front, Hong Kong, April 25, 1955, p. 22.

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of the former consideration leads inevitably to excessive discipline, overwork, and probably a high incidence of sickness and mortality. However, these establishments should not be generally identified with extermination camps, because there are occasional releases in the case of lesser "criminals." Extermination is reserved only for the politically incorrigible, and the differentiation between those who can be reformed and those who cannot is an effective means of bringing about the acceptance of the Communist ideology. Where no practical alternative is available, outward acceptance may in time become genuine acceptance. In this connection knowledge about life within the refugee camps in Hong Kong and of escapees from Communist China in general can be of major influence on propaganda about forced labor in Communist China.

2. Conscript labor is not unknown in Chinese history. What is significant in the Communist Chinese practice is the length of service, integration of forced labor into national economic planning, and the systematic liquidation of political opposition to the ruling party. The combination of these factors serves to identify the Communist Chinese system of forced labor with the methods of Soviet dictatorship, a fact which can be profitably pointed out.

3. The harsh treatment of prisoners doing forced labor may be compared with the extremely low wages of that part of free labor which is worst paid. The disparity in real "wages" poses a serious threat to free labor inasmuch as it is a powerful factor in labor discipline. The lack of a clear-cut distinction between conscript labor and prisoner labor and the flexibility of the term "counterrevolutionary" must be fairly obvious to all workers.

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Consequently, it would be futile merely to point to wage and other differences between free and forced labor in present-day Communist China without presenting a third alternative.

4. Much of the worst aspect of forced labor, such as the working conditions of water-conservation workers on the Ching-chiang project, owes its origin to the complete lack of mechanical tools and equipment. This is a situation inherent in the present stage of Chinese economic development. However, it may be conveniently related to the limited scope of Soviet assistance and used as a wedge in undermining Soviet-Chinese relations.